

# **ARIZONA OUTDOOR RECREATION COORDINATING COMMISSION**

## **(AORCC) OF ARIZONA STATE PARKS**

Basement Board Room  
1300 West Washington  
Phoenix, AZ 85007  
October 22, 2009

### **A. CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL at 1:07pm**

Chair Bell called the meeting to order at 1:07 pm. Chief Pulsifer called roll and announced that a quorum is present.

Commission Member Participating in person or by teleconference:

Jeff Bell, Chair

Renée Bahl, Executive Director of ASP

William Schwind – arrived 1:11 pm

Devin Rankin

Karla Brady, via teleconference

Commission Member Absent:

Larry Voyles

Margaret Nyberg

Arizona State Parks Staff:

Doris Pulsifer, Chief of Grants

Robert Baldwin, Recreational Trails Grants Coordinator

Danielle Silvas, Grant Coordinator

Gloria Yazzie, CSR II

Guests:

Alan Nelson, La Paz County Sheriff's Office

### **B. INTRODUCTION OF MEMBERS AND STAFF**

Members and staff introduced themselves.

### **C. ACTION ITEMS**

#### **1. Approval of minutes from August 13, 2009**

Motion by Commissioner Bahl; Commissioner Rankin second, no further discussion. Motion passed.

#### **2. AORCC will consider and review items to include in the report to the Arizona State Parks Board in November 2009.**

- **Items may include but are not limited to: Protection of Heritage Funds**
- **Importance and Impact of the grant programs**
- **Raising Community Support**
- **Need to review Memorandum of Understanding between AORCC and the Board for possible updates**

- **Project Success stories**

At the last meeting Commissioner Rankin accepted the task of making a presentation to the Parks Board on November 13, 2009. Commissioner Rankin passed out a draft of her presentation with comments written in from Chief Pulsifer and Commissioner Schwind. Presentation for ASP Board meeting to include:

- Commissioner Rankin will introduce herself and her position on Commission with a brief overview of what AORCC is and does (for new Parks Board members);
- Introduction of the slide show which highlights completed projects from around the state (Rankin questioned the committee on wording for the projects - Committee agreed projects were "recommended by AORCC and "approved" by the Parks Board);
- Suspended and Reinstated Projects – quick review of funds made available to continue projects;
- Cancelled Projects – identify projects;
- Goals – revisit the MOU between AORCC and Parks Board, focus on protecting Heritage Fund, and
- Closing Remarks.

Commissioner Rankin notes the presentation is a rough draft, to include more for the Parks Board meeting.

Commissioner Brady asked if Commissioner Rankin is addressing SLIF in addition to the Heritage Fund. SLIF to be included in the suspended and reinstated projects.

Commissioner Rankin responded that she has primarily addressed LRSP and Trails projects so far and asked for comments as to where to insert SLIF, perhaps near the end with the recommendation to protect the Heritage Fund and restoring SLIF

Ms. Silvas stated that the presentation starts off with pictures of LRSP fund projects and is timed to coincide with discussion five projects displayed from each fund. The project sponsor and grant dollar amounts are presented. There are five projects for the Trails fund and five from SLIF. They are projects that have closed from June 2008 through July 2009.

Commissioner Brady wanted to be sure SLIF projects were addressed because Bullhead City lost funding on an incomplete project.

Commissioner Rankin asked about including a list of cancelled and suspended SLIF projects.

Ms. Silvas reminded the Commission that there were no SLIF projects awarded in September, so there aren't any projects that were cancelled in the last round. The last projects were awarded in September 2008 and those projects were

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terminated in February 2009. That's why they have not been addressed as recent cancellations or suspensions.

Commissioner Rankin will close the presentation emphasizing the important work AORCC performs in reviewing and making grant recommendations and creating partnerships with the communities. She will include Commissioner Schwind's suggestion that the presentation end with a challenging question to the Parks Board about what can be done to better protect the grant funds. Commissioner Schwind asked what mechanisms are in place to protect the Retirement System from the legislature raid as opposed to Heritage Fund and what we can do through the ASP Board to get that on an equal plane.

Commissioner Bahl responded that she was not familiar with how the Retirement Fund was structured, but the Heritage Fund and many other fund were approved with the language "notwithstanding" which allows the legislature to appropriate them for another purpose. The only legal way is to have the public vote to protect them. Other than that legislative pressure by public is the only thing that works.

Commissioner Schwind was under the impression that the Heritage fund was voter protected.

Commissioner Bahl stated that the voter protection act was passed in 2001 at the time the Growing Smarter legislation was passed. The Heritage Fund was passed in 1990 and is not covered under that law.

Chair Bell asked if the Commission could work to get the funds covered under that law.

Commissioner Bahl responded that these things can be brought to the voter ballot at the cost of about \$6 million per issue. The Heritage Alliance has considered that and I would offer to them that if they are going to do it, they should increase the amount of money because \$10 million doesn't very far these days. Yes, you can ask the Parks Board help getting these funds protected.

Commissioner Schwind suggested that the Arizona League of Cities might be an avenue for support of this type of initiative.

Commissioner Bahl suggest going to the Heritage Alliance. They are powerful and could affect the entire fund, not just the Parks portion.

Rankin asked that any final suggestions be emailed to her soon.

NOTE: At the end of the meeting Commissioner Bahl suggested that the LEBSF fund be included in the presentation to the Parks Board as one of the funds that AORCC reviews and makes a recommendation. We need to paint the full picture of AORCC.

**3. Consider Establishing a Task Force to Revise the Trails Heritage Fund and Recreational Trails Program (Motorized Portion) Grant Application Manuals and Rating Criteria.**

Mr. Baldwin stated that every five years after approval of the state trails plan, the criteria for rating motorized and non-motorized grants is revised. The criteria determine how grants are scored and ultimately who receives a grant. Typically, a task force is convened including city, county, federal and user partners. The motorized and non-motorized groups meet together to discuss program issues, then the groups separate to discuss the priority recommendation for each program and how to convert them to quantifiable criteria. Mr. Baldwin provided an outline of the time requirements and asked the Commission to select a representative to participate on the task force. The goal is to produce two manuals that are as similar as possible. The goal is to produce a manual (particularly for the motorized program) to take to the Parks Board in March. Annie McVay, State Trails Coordinator will be working with Mr. Baldwin on the project.

Commissioner Schwind asked about the size of the task force.

Mr. Baldwin responded that the first meeting is open to anyone who is available and interested in attending. The meeting asks for comments on the program in whole. Then separate motorized and non-motorized groups are formed to address specific recommendations. Ten to fifteen is a good number as long as all parts of the state and different interests are represented.

Commissioner Schwind nominated himself. Commissioner Bahl motioned to approve nomination. Commissioner Rankin seconded. Motion passed.

D. **REPORTS** - Commission and staff reports may be written or verbal.

**1. Parks Board Actions on AORCC Items.**

Chief Pulsifer reported that the only from the last AORCC meeting to go to the Parks Board was their approval of the 2010 State Trails Plan. The Parks Board approved the plan at the September meeting.

**2. Agency Budget Update**

Commissioner Bahl stated that the agency budget reconciliation was approved by the Governor and received a favorable review from the Joint Legislative Budget Committee (JLBC) and included money to reinstate the suspended grant projects. The participants have been notified to resume work and we are reminding them that they need to get the projects completed and billed as soon as possible.

Commissioner Bahl stated that the State Parks budget from July has been reduced by 26%. About one third of our positions are vacant. Funds available for grants and the implementation of new grants has been reduced. Planning for

statewide programs including trails and OHV have been reduced. The statewide environmental and education programs have been eliminated along with the state archaeologist, ecologist, and open space planning positions and functions.

Commissioner Bahl stated Oracle State Park has been closed to the public and Fort Verde and Tonto Bridge only remain open because the cities are supporting them and we leased Yuma Quartermaster Depot to the City of Yuma. No State Parks staff is there.

Commissioner Bahl stated the State Parks now has a budget that we have to live with and now it's all about how we will re-emerge. You will see staff being moved and reductions in force have been completed with further reductions are scheduled in coming weeks. That will leave us presumably flat for the second half of the fiscal year.

Commissioner Bahl stated that after all of these reductions the Governor's office has instructed us to find another \$5.8 million in reductions. Our proposal has been submitted including the entire Law Enforcement and Boating Safety Fund at \$2.8 million (entire accumulation from July 2009 to June 2010); \$1 million from the Off-Highway Vehicle Recreation Fund; and money from the State Parks Heritage Fund legislated to go to the State Forester in January and March 2010 in the amounts of \$1.5 million each. Our submission asked that that money be included in our \$5.8 million reduction instead of being given to the State Forester. The Governor is collecting this information without returning comments just to paint a picture of what the state could look like if we don't increase our revenues. The Parks Board was not able to meet and take action on this and it is now, basically, out there as public information to support the Governor's proposal to institute an additional 1% sales tax.

Commissioner Bahl stated that the Parks Board has stated their priority is to keep as many parks open and operating as possible.

Commissioner Bahl informed the Commission that the Governor's Task Force on Sustainable Park is due to make its recommendation possibly as soon as tomorrow. Today the Morrison Institute announced the results of their report on the financial needs of State Parks and the possible options for funding. The report suggests and I believe the Governor's Task Force will recommend a vehicle license tag benefit. That would be an amount (\$10-15) paid upon registration that would allow Arizona vehicles admission to the parks free or at a reduced rate. California, Michigan, Washington, and Montana have (or are considering) this same method to provide continuing substantial funding. Any suggestion would still cost the approximate \$6 million to get on the ballot next year. This is good news and I will keep you apprised on the developments. Having sustainable funding for the department allows the special funds to be passed through in grants as intended.

Commissioner Schwind asked and Ms. Silvas responded that the Parks Board meeting on November 13<sup>th</sup> will be held at the Carnegie Library across

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Washington street at 11<sup>th</sup> Avenue. Time has not been set as the agenda is very large and some items need to be time certain.

Rankin asked and Commissioner Bahl responded that the committee presentations will not be cut. This is one item the Parks Board is looking forward to.

Chair Bell asked and Commissioner Bahl responded that the Governor's Task Force on Sustainable Parks is 12 to 15 members including:

Rich Dozier, Chair  
Bill Scalzo, Vice-Chair  
Sam Campana  
Bill Cordasco  
Susan Culp  
Diana Freshwater  
Grady Gammage  
Richard Hubbard  
Glen Kerslake  
Bob McLendon  
Bill Meek

Harry Papp  
Bill Roe  
Jeff Williamson  
Mike Anabel, Governor's Staff  
State Parks Staff:  
Renée Bahl  
Jay Ziemann  
Ellen Bilbrey  
Monica Enriquez  
Dawn Collins  
Annie McVay

A lot of these people are not from a parks or recreation background. They represent people from the business world and finance. I was initially disappointed when I saw the list, but now realize what a great decision that was. The different perspectives enhance the process and give credence to the final recommendation.

#### **E. CALL TO THE PUBLIC**

Alan Nelson, La Paz County Sheriff's Office – Sheriff Nelson stated that all of the county sheriffs that participate in the LEBSF program oppose the State Parks recommendation not to distribute the fund as intended. We don't support State Parks using these county funds instead of adjusting their operating budget. We could probably survive a 15% reduction in the funding, but 100% of a fund that is not even part of the State Parks operating budget is objectionable. This has an even bigger impact since the most recent watercraft survey information indicates the La Paz county boat usage increase despite the reported 38% decrease across the state. We will go to the legislature and governor to protect those funds and we feel that AORCC has a fiduciary duty to see that the funds are used for their intended purpose under the law.

Commissioner Bahl commented that Sheriff Nelson's comments are not surprising. She would have been surprised if there was silence. There are no secrets. We will include this in the minutes.

#### **F. SUMMARY OF CURRENT EVENTS, MATTERS OF BOARD PROCEDURE, REQUESTS AND ITEMS FOR FUTURE AGENDA**

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Chief Pulsifer stated that we are trying to deliver the AORCC packages electronically. We need to know if anyone has difficulty receiving or opening any of the documents.

**G. TIME AND PLACE OF NEXT MEETINGS - TBA**

Commissioner Bahl asked and Chief Pulsifer responded that the yearly schedule for AORCC meetings is generally presented at the first meeting of the year.

Commissioner Schwind indicated he would like to get in touch with Mr. Baldwin to discuss the project he has been assigned.

**H. ADJOURNMENT at 1:50pm.**